

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Outline 2026-27

PHILOSOPHY 2200F
Ancient Philosophy

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of several key figures and ideas in early Greek philosophy. Philosophers we will read include Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, and Epictetus. Topics include the nature of reality and what we can know of it, virtue, and the well-lived life. We will see the historical roots of many important and lasting philosophical ideas, such the principle of sufficient reason and the definition of knowledge as justified true belief. We will take the opportunity reading these texts provides to ask some enduring questions about our world and the lives we lead.

The course will be divided into four units: (1) Before Plato (two weeks); (2) Plato (four weeks); (3) Aristotle (four weeks); and (4) After Aristotle (two weeks).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who have done the readings and attended lectures should, by the completion of this course, have gained an understanding of a number of core issues in ancient philosophy. The texts we will read are challenging and, in some cases, fragmentary and obscure. This course will provide an opportunity to develop skills in careful, analytic reading and analysis. Students will be required to write in class regularly, and so will have the opportunity to develop their skills of written expression.

TEXTS

There will be one paper text: Cooper and Grube (eds.), *Plato: Five Dialogues* 2nd ed. (Hackett, 2002), available at the book store (approx. \$17). The rest of the readings will be available on the course Brightspace page.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

There are two modes of assessment in this course.

(1) Five bi-weekly in-class tests/writing exercises. You may choose to complete four of these or do all five, in which case your top four grades will count. They are worth 15% each, for a total of 60% of your final grade.

These tests/writing exercises will take up all of five of our Thursday meetings: Sept 24, Oct 8, Oct 29, Nov 12, and Nov 26.

They will be in wide variety of formats. For example, the first, on the Presocratic philosophers, will ask you to identify the author or subject of a number of passages we will have read, and to briefly discuss the significance of each. Another will ask you to analyze two of three passages we will have discussed in class, each provided in class on the day you write. Another will ask you to write a short essay answering one of two questions given in advance. In each case I will announce the format well in advance on the test/writing exercise.

Owing to the flexibility in this assessment (you need write only four of five), undocumented absences will not be accepted for missing any. I will schedule makeups for any or all test/writing exercises for students who have secured a recommendation for accommodation from the academic counselling office in their faculties. They will ask for documentation.

(2) A final exam, worth 40%. This will be cumulative, though there will be some emphasis on the last unit ("After Aristotle"), because there will not have been an in-class test/writing exercise on that material. You will be asked to answer four of eight questions in short essays, in two hours.

Attendance will not be graded, but it is expected, and will be rewarded in the in-class tests/writing exercises and exams, whose content will reflect the work we do together in class.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The Department of Philosophy policies that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No electronic devices, or aids of any kind, will be permitted during the in-class assessments of final exam.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

No use of AI is permitted in this course.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION

Academic Accommodation is "a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program."

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisa>

bilities.pdf. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Accessible Education at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

SPECIAL EXAMINATIONS

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Western’s Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be “given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test”.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: https://www.uwo.ca/biology/pdfs/undergraduate/rights-and-responsibilities/scholastic_discipline_.pdf

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends (24/7 availability).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/index.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.